



# Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

## Volunteer Strategy 2017- 2020



## 1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) places a high value on its standing as an active and engaged stakeholder across Northamptonshire.

NFRS continue to be committed to the delivery of a range of qualitative, preventative services to vulnerable people and the wider community it serves.

As an organisation, we have responded and adapted to change over the last ten years. However, to remain effective and relevant, we have taken steps to proactively look how we can shape our delivery models for the future years, through the expansion and growth of volunteering, externally as well as internally.

All of our staff are highly valued, this also includes our volunteers, as we recognise they have a huge role to play in how we continue to engage with the community and deliver those services more efficiently and effectively.

Volunteering brings benefits to both the individuals and the organisation and can support a range of Community Risk Management (CRM) activities. Some people volunteer to gain new skills and experience, some to meet new people and some because they have a personal connection to our Service and want to give something back.

To achieve our ambitious vision of improving outcomes for communities within Northamptonshire we must grow volunteering. This does not just mean recruiting more volunteers. It also means involving volunteers more effectively in everything we do, such as supporting key decisions and ensuring volunteering is a central tenant within our delivery plans now and for the future.

## 2 VOLUNTEERING FOR NFRS

Having the right structure in place for volunteering will ensure we know who volunteers for NFRS.

Volunteering should be enjoyable and a positive experience, and support for volunteers should be flexible and meet the needs of the individual person. Guidance for volunteers should be straightforward and new ideas and creativity should be encouraged.

We'll be able to engage and involve volunteers more effectively in the future, and improve communications with and between volunteers. We recognise the wealth of skills and experience volunteers bring, as well as the unique contribution that comes from choosing to be involved. To do this we will:

- Ensure all volunteers have a named contact to speak to with any queries or concerns
- We'll make sure they're supported whatever their volunteer role
- Improve communications with volunteers and encourage a culture of open, effective and honest dialogue between staff and volunteers
- Introduce straightforward guidance (handbook), so volunteers understand what they can expect and what's expected of them
- Establish a system for measuring the value and impact of volunteering, so we can better recognise volunteer contributions

### 3 VOLUNTEERING ROLES WITHIN NFRS

There are a number of ways in which people can volunteer with NFRS. At present the primary areas in which people can volunteer are within CRM:

- Fire Cadet Instructors (Northamptonshire Emergency Services Cadets (NESC))
- Community Prevention

With new initiatives being developed all the time, managers are thinking differently and exploring opportunities for volunteers.

These roles involve supporting service delivery and engaging the communities of Northamptonshire. We also recognise the role internal staff can play in supporting volunteering. This also has the same benefits in terms of learning new roles, understanding how other parts of the service are delivered and supporting risk reduction campaigns.

We will ensure that volunteers undertake the appropriate security checks, training and briefings to ensure that their health, safety, wellbeing is a priority and that the volunteering experience with NFRS is both enjoyable and rewarding.